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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-eighth session
Agenda item 10

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF DETAINEES

Written statement submitted by Pax Christi International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV)

[22 August 1996]

1. During the 17-year reign of the theocratic regime in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the international community has been witness to flagrant violations of the most rudimentary rights of the Iranian people and the most degrading inhuman conduct by the clerics. Trampling upon fundamental freedoms, adopting misogynous laws leading to systematic discrimination and violent clampdown against women, denying religious minorities the right to proselytize, manifested in the murder of Christian and Sunni leaders; suppressing ethnic minorities and, finally, assassinating Iranian dissidents and the Resistance's activists abroad, are but glimpses of the abysmal human rights record of the ruling clerics.

2. This behaviour has prompted 37 condemnations by various organs of the United Nations in more than a decade. To evade international censure and overcome global isolation, Tehran's rulers have resorted to new schemes that are planned and implemented by the Iranian Intelligence Ministry. Described as "turning the human rights card against the Iranian Resistance," one such scheme aims to disseminate absolutely fabricated and false allegations against the Iranian Resistance in a bid to tarnish its stature and credibility in the world arena. The ultimate objective is to dampen the mullahs' inhuman crimes and undermine international denunciations of the regime.

3. To this end, the regime has routinely tried to pressure and persecute the families of Iranian exiles. To date, some 3,500 cases have been identified where Intelligence Ministry agents have attempted to pressure Iranian refugees and opposition activists through repeated telephone contacts and personal approaches to parents to persuade their children to stop their political activities.

4. Citing three such cases clearly attests to the dimensions of this scheme and the regime's designs to circumvent international condemnations.

5. A Mojahedin sympathizer and a former political prisoner from 1982 to 1992, Mr. Mehrdad Kavoosi, had left Iran and sought political asylum in Turkey. As he was to be accepted as a refugee by the Government of Sweden, he was arrested by Turkish authorities and handed over to the Iranian regime. His arrest and subsequent expulsion outraged the world community and was widely covered in the international media. While in captivity, Mr. Kavoosi, was threatened with execution and subjected to repeated interrogation. The Intelligence Ministry demanded that he write letters to Professor Maurice Danby Copithorne, the Special Representative of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, UNHCR and Amnesty International, falsely claiming that his wife was being held hostage by the Mojahedin organization. The regime's agents made his release and departure from Iran contingent upon writing and sending these letters. To this end, they transferred him to Turkey and ordered him to send by facsimile the letters in question to the designated recipients. Only then was he given his passport. Now a political refugee in Sweden, Mehrdad will testify before the Sub-Commission about his ordeal while in captivity in Iran.

6. The parents of a veteran member of the Mojahedin, Mr. Abba Minachi, were contacted by the Intelligence Ministry and an Iranian diplomat in Paris who told them that their son had been imprisoned by the Mojahedin. By so doing, they forced Mr. Minachi's parents to write to Professor Copithorne, Amnesty International and other human rights organizations and to state their concern about his plight.

7. The renowned Iranian baritone, Mr. Mohammad Taghadossi, who performed a number of concerts in solidarity with the Iranian Resistance, was pressured through his father who himself had been persecuted and intimidated by the Intelligence Ministry. He was asked to issue a statement and announce that he had parted ways with the Resistance. The Intelligence Ministry even sent the

text of the statement in question to him from Tehran via a facsimile transmission. Through one of its agents in Germany, Jamshid Tafreshi, the Ministry published the statement in an affiliated Iranian weekly, Nimrooz, Mr. Taghadossi described the whole affair in a meeting with Mr. Copithorne some time ago.

8. An Iranian film director, Mr. Mansour Ghadarkhah, a political refugee in Germany, was threatened to death and ordered to stop producing a film about Mrs. Marzieh, the Iranian diva, and her joining the Resistance movement.

9. We believe that such schemes, which intend to conceal the gross human rights abuses in Iran, must be condemned. Moreover, we call upon human rights rapporteurs and experts, Governments and NGOs to maintain their vigilance in the face of such ploys and deceitful tactics and not allow the United Nations instruments and those of human rights organizations to become a plaything in the hands of the fundamentalist regime ruling Iran.